A States-Item **FIRST**

No Marcello-Capitol Link Found in Telephone Probe

7-5-68

By BILL LYNCH
(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE—No evidence has been found of a reputed telephone link between rackets figure Carlos Marcello and the state Capitol, a report being prepared by parish and state officials will show, the States-Item has learned.

The report is being readied for release next week by East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney Sargent Pitcher and Gen. Thomas Burbank, director of the state Department of Public Safety.

IT COVERS A nine-month investigation and a briefer one by Burbank into allegations by Life Magazine of a purported link between Marcello and former governor's aide Aubrey Young.

The report relies heavily on documents furnished Pitcher by the U.S. Justice Department.

The records, summary of toll calls from Marcello's Town and Country Motel in Metairie, fail to show any calls to the capitol number, 343-6106, which Life had described as Young's "direct line."

ON THE BASIS of the Life Magazine charges last September, Gov. McKeithen declared that there was overwhelming evidence against Young, who resigned.

The Pitcher-Burbank report, it was learned, will show that no evidence bearing out the

See MARCELLO— Page 6

Marcello--

Continued from Front Page

charges was obtained from either the Justice Department or from Life magazine officials. A state police investigator, Raymond Beck, interviewed Marcello, who denied he made a series of calls to Young in 1966 and 1967.

The Marcello interview disclosed that he had talked twice with Young over other telephones, as the former governor's aide admitted previously. It also revealed that another person contacted Young over the controversial 343-6106 number from Marcello's office.

THE TELEPHONE, 343-6106, was actually a phone maintained in the office of the speaker of the House for C. H. "Sammy" Downs, now an unpaid administrative assistant to the governor. Downs did not maintain an office in the Capitol during the period covered by Life.

In an article published Sept. 29, 1967, Life said that "many times, from June, 1966, until March, 1967, Carlos Marcello placed telephone calls to Aubrey Young's direct line (343-6106) at the governor's offices in the state Capitol at Baton Rouge."

Life, which is being sued by Young for $5.5 million, later furnished Gov. McKeithen with a list of dates from May 17 through Sept. 16, during which time 13 calls were supposed to have been made.

IN ADDITION, Life told the governor at a New York conference that the "investigation of the period May, 1966, to March, 1967, would, it is believed, reveal some 50 or 60 calls ot Young."

Justice Department records cover the period from May through October, 1966. Those which Life may have showing the calls were not made available to either Pitcher or the Justice Department.

Beck and Tom McFerring, chief counsel for the state Labor-Management Commission, met with Life offiicals in New York recently and received no supporting documents from the magazine to back up its charges.

THE MAGAZINE reported-

ly offered to "swap" information with the two Louisiana men on a "you show me what you have and we'll show you ours" basis. The offer was declined.

District Attorney Pitcher, who is not a political ally of the governor, was asked last October to conduct his own investigation into the case.

For months Pitcher was stymied by the lack of cooperation from the U.S. Justice Department.

It was only through persistent efforts and appeals directly to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark by Pitcher that the records were eventually obtained.

ONLY LAST month the Justice Department notified Pitcher he would receive all of the records pertaining to the Marcello phone that the FBI had obtained. The Justice Department had said earlier that the actual toll records had been destroyed and only a resume made by the FBI remained.

With delivery of the available records, a final report on the investigation was started by Pitcher. Gov. McKeithen consistently applied pressure to the district attorney to make a report, but Pitcher refused to do so until he had obtained all of the records the Justice Department would furnish.

McKeithen assigned the state police to do a separate investigation following disclosures by the States-Item that another separate probe had been halted when it began pointing in directions other than Young.

IT WAS REVEALED that the controversial telephone was kept in a locked cabinet in the speaker's office and answered only by a secretary acting on behalf of Downs.

Downs also denied ever having received any calls from Marcello.

However, information obtained from Marcello by the state police purportedly shows that one call was made to Downs at that number from the Marcello phone.

The state police investigation also will show that the Marcello phone was located at four points in the Town and Country Motel.

AN EARLIER investigation, separate from that of Pitcher, was being made by agents of the Labor - Management Commission. However, that probe was dropped shortly after it became aparent that the allegations against Young may not have been true.

Stung by news stories about the controversial phone, McKeithen ordered Burbank to assign Beck to the investigation.

In the past few weeks Young has been saying he expects to be exonerated by the Pitcher-Burbank report.